



Committee on **HOMELAND SECURITY** Chairman Michael McCaul

Opening Statement

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**Statement of Subcommittee Chairman Richard Hudson (R-NC)
Subcommittee on Transportation Security
Committee on Homeland Security**

**Joint Subcommittee Hearing: “TSA Integrity Challenges: Examining Misconduct by
Airport Security Personnel.”**

Remarks as Prepared

I recognize that TSA screeners have a tough job. It is hard to imagine spending all day inspecting hundreds of people and their personal possessions, trying to stop a disaster from happening, but never knowing exactly what the threat looks like or when it might strike.

It is precisely the nature of the job that leaves absolutely no room for misconduct at the screening checkpoints. At best, misconduct is a distraction to the screeners who are actually focused on preventing a bomb from getting on an airplane and killing thousands of innocent people; at worst it is gross negligence that undermines the security of the United States and the confidence of citizens in government.

Earlier this year, my Subcommittee held a series of hearings on TSA’s efforts to advance risk-based security, where we discussed the seriousness of the threats we face, and what it will take for TSA to successfully implement Pre-Check and other risk-based screening initiatives.

Now, more than ever, as TSA continues its much-needed transition toward risk-based security (RBS), the agency must fine-tune its hiring practices to ensure that it is employing the best-qualified candidates to secure our nation’s airports and that once hired, each employee is held to the highest possible standard. It is critically important that as TSA moves toward a more

concentrated and agile screening process, it also focuses in quality over quantity of its screening personnel.

It's no secret that TSA's image with the American public has been tarnished, and security has been compromised with certain cases of wrongdoing among TSA employees. These instances may not represent the majority of TSA employees, but they do have a direct impact on TSA's relationship with travelers and the overall screening environment. Reports that cases of employee misconduct have increased by nearly thirty percent over the past three years do little to instill confidence in an agency that is already fighting an uphill battle.

Today's hearing will provide the opportunity to hear from TSA and GAO about what steps can be taken to reduce employee misconduct, improve consistency in how these cases are handled by TSA, and identify new opportunities to promote integrity and professionalism within the workforce. GAO's recent report makes several important recommendations to TSA on ways to improve how it handles employee misconduct, and I look forward to discussing those recommendations here today.

Finally, I am concerned that TSA's attention to conduct stops short of addressing the issue of failing a covert test.

TSA conducts covert testing at airport checkpoints as a way to identify security weaknesses. If a screener fails a covert test, her or she is taken off the line and instructed on what part of the test he or she failed. However, there is apparently no consequence or penalty; instead the person is retrained and allowed to go back to the checkpoint and screen for explosives.

I think this issue is worth exploring further: If someone fails multiple tests and a simulated bomb is able to get through security and onto an airplane, what should be the penalty for that individual, if our ultimate goal is to maximize the security that is being provided?

I look forward to the witnesses' perspectives on this, as well as the other areas for improvement identified by the GAO in its report.

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